Testing Laboratories (SPTLs) are in bad shape and in no position to detect peticides;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Central grants for upgrading these laboratories have also remained under-utilised;

(c) whether this was pointed out in the reports submitted by Central teams sent to States to carry out audit of such laboratories;

(d) whether it is a fact that NABL accreditation is not mandatory for such State run laboratories; and

(e) if so, the details of steps taken in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) No, Sir. But Government is aware that some State Pesticides Testing Laboratories require strengthening.

(b) In order to set-up/strengthen the facilities for testing of pesticides samples in States, the Central Government had extended financial assistance to the tune of Rs. 6.79 crore for upgradation of State Pesticides Testing Laboratories (SPTLs) to the States during the VIII and IX Five Year Plans. Out of this, Rs. 4.64 crore have already been utilized by the State Governments for the stated purpose. Regarding the balance amounts, where the funds could not yet be utilized revalidation of the grants released to the States have been done on request from the concerned State Governments.

(c) The Technical audit of SPTLs was undertaken with a view to strengthen the SPTLs and the teams have projected the required strengthening in their reports.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) Department of Agriculture & Cooperation has advised States/ UTs to initiate appropriate action for getting NABL accreditation for the SPTLs.

Special Drought Relief

1104. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that under the Minimum Support Price, the

Centre has sanctioned Special Drought Relief (SDR) of coarse grains and paddy at Rs. 20/- per quintal considering the severe drought condition in Karnataka;

(b) if so, the number of States to which the SDR was extended during the last three years, with total amount sanctioned and released, State-wise, year-wise and grain/crop-wise;

(c) whether Government of Karnataka has requested for revision of SDR on coarse grains; and

(d) if so, the details and the Centre's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The Government had approved the payment of Special Drought Relief Price (SDRP) of Rs. 20/- per quintal for paddy, Rs. 10/- per quintal for bajra and Rs. 5/- per quintal for jowar/maize/ragi/barley over and above the respective Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) fixed for the kharif and rabi crops of 2002-03 season. The special drought relief price was applicable on a uniform basis throughout the country including Karnataka.

(b) During the last three years the special drought relief price has been announced only once *i.e.*, for kharif and rabi crops of 2002-03 season. Details regarding State-wise, year-wise and crop-wise special drought relief disbursed during 2002-03 season are being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) and (d) The State Government of Karnataka had requested that special drought relief price of coarse grain should be at least as much as for paddy and preferably higher @ Rs. 40/- per quintal. It was not found possible to agree to the proposals since it was observed that (i) over the period 1990-91 to 2001-02 the MSP for paddy increased at a lower rate of 159% than the MSP for coarse cereals which increased by 169%; (ii) the increase in gross revenue obtainable with the respective MSPs at the national average yields was 188% during 1990-91 to 2001-02 in case of paddy *vis-a-vis* 220% in the case of coarse cereals.